The Bolsheviks added a military note to the occasion by bringing up a couple of regiments and an armored division.

Lenin had not changed in appearance since I had last seen him. The same brisk movements, the same twinkling eyes and sly smile. He recognized me in the group of members of the Executive Committee on the platform, embraced me, and asked, "Again with us, Comrade Petrov?"

"I do not know where you stand," I replied.

"We shall talk it over," he laughed, rushing to the exit. In the parade reception room of the station Chkheidze greeted him, but he did not listen. He stepped briskly to the plaza and looked intently at the crowd—the ocean of red flags, tanks, ranks of soldiers. Then he climbed on top of a car and began to speak in his old way, self-confident and contemptuous of those who disagreed with him. He denounced the Provisional Government as a bunch of counterrevolutionary imperialists, denounced the majority in the Soviet and its Executive Committee as fools and cowards, called on the workers and soldiers to take over power and transform the imperialist slaughter into a world revolution. The crowd did not register much enthusiasm.

On Lenin's invitation, I rode in his car from the station to Bolshevist headquarters. He did not say a word the entire way. Bolshevist headquarters occupied the palatial mansion of a prima ballerina, Kshessinskaya, who was regarded in Petrograd as a close friend of Nicholas. Early in the revolution a regiment had used the building as a club. Then it was turned over to the local Bolshevist organization, and the latter transferred it to the Central Committee. Bolshevist party workers and delegates to the All-Russian Convention of the Soviets were assembled in the main ballroom. I recognized among them several army representatives who had voted with the majority of the Executive Committee. There were also a dozen or more guests. All waited patiently while Lenin huddled with his Petrograd lieutenants. He emerged from the caucus after midnight.

A strange meeting followed. The exquisitely luxurious room, with golden garlands carved on white Corinthian columns. Three hundred men and women on folding chairs, all listening intently to the diatribe that would become the Sermon on the Mount of a new church. The crux of Lenin's program was a merciless fight against the Socialists, who had betrayed the revolution by supporting the Provisional Government and the war. In his first appearance before those who were to become the core of his army, Lenin deliberately hurled the most abusive language against his opponents. He seemed to sift his listeners, saying to them, "Either you follow me or join the traitors, the fools, the lackeys of the bourgeoisie!"

In this speech, Lenin mingled Marxian terminology and old clichés